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THE

AWAKENED SINNER DIRECTED.

What must I do to be saved?

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

Acts 16 : 30, 31.

BY CALEB KIMBALL,

AUTHOR OF "THE YOUNG CHRISTIAN DIRECTED," &c.

Fifth Edition.



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P R E F A C E .

THE following pages are designed to assist those to enter the way of life, who are awakened to the importance of personal religion. He, who, with such an object in view, is to impart, and they, who, while approaching a crisis so momentous, are to receive, instruction, alike need to be under the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit. It has been my object to present, in simplicity and with directness, such considerations as seemed best adapted to impress the mind, and lead the

awakened sinner to an immediate and unconditional surrender to Christ. To derive the greatest benefit from the perusal of this book, it should be read in course, not hastily, but with deep and solemn reflection. Remember that you are now reading for eternity, and that every sentence will in some way affect your endless destination. Read, therefore, with a devotional spirit, feeling your entire dependence upon God, and looking up to him with fervent desires for the continued presence of the divine Teacher. Often pause and reflect; make the truth your own; apply it to yourself, for whom it was especially designed; admit the truth, when discovered, however it may conflict with your former opinions, or undermine your present hopes. In passing from

one topic to another, ask yourself, “Is the work done, and done thoroughly? Will it stand the trial of the last day? Have I submitted to Christ? Do I now submit cheerfully and heartily to his authority?” Rest not till you have satisfactory evidence that you have experienced that great spiritual change required, in the word of God, as an indispensable prerequisite for admission to heaven.

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THE
AWAKENED SINNER DIRECTED.

CHAPTER I.

THE SINNER AWAKENED.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Acts 2: 37.

THE title of this book, "The Awakened Sinner Directed," indicates the importance and solemnity of the considerations which it ought to contain, and the great responsibility resting upon him who undertakes to present them. The weight of this responsibility he should constantly feel, while directing those whose destinies for a vast eternity his instructions may affect. The individuals, for whose benefit these pages are especially designed, are supposed to be favored with the special operations of the

Holy Spirit. Persons of this description, in the early stages of their religious impressions, are ordinarily alarmed from a consideration of their condition, and of their prospects for another world. The alarm of the awakened sinner arises from an apprehension of danger in view of sin committed, seen, and felt, or from a discovery of the consequences resulting from a violation of God's holy law.

With these preliminary remarks, I shall take it for granted, that you, for whose benefit especially I am now writing, are beginning to feel your guilt and danger, as an impenitent sinner, under the law and government of a just and holy God, and are anxious to know what you shall do to be saved. You are alarmed, and at this I am not surprised; the only cause for wonder is, that you have slumbered so long; that alarm, even to fearfulness and quaking, did not seize upon you years since. There certainly is, in your case, as an unpardoned sinner, a sufficient reason why you should be anxious; and this, I trust,

you will be able more clearly to see, before we close this chapter.

Is it surprising, that the sailor boy should be alarmed, when the heavens gather blackness, when darkness mantles the ocean, the thunders roar, the lightnings flash, the tempest howls, and rocks and whirlpools are just before him? Stupidity, in such a case, would not only be unnatural, but highly criminal. His alarm is perfectly rational—it is the result of impending danger. And can it be thought a matter of surprise, that a sinner should be alarmed, with his eyes open upon the law, character, and government of God; with a clear view of his condition as a guilty creature, condemned for disobedience, and passing onward to the retributions of eternity, liable every moment to sink to the nethermost hell? His alarm is perfectly rational; it is an effect corresponding with its cause, and precisely such an effect as we might expect from a correct knowledge of his condition and destiny as an accountable being.

You admit that you are an unpardoned sinner; and a sinner, who has not been pardoned, is represented in Scripture as being under sentence of death, and a death more dreadful than human language is adequate to describe. Says an inspired apostle, "The wages of sin is death," Rom. 6: 23; and God repeatedly declares, by Ezekiel the prophet, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Ezek. 18: 4, 20. The nature of this death, to which you and every impenitent sinner are exposed, we must learn from the word of God. It is to be damned. "He that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16: 16. It is indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish. "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile." Rom. 2: 8, 9. It is to be turned into hell. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Ps. 9: 17. It is everlasting

punishment. "These [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment." Matt. 25: 46. It is torment in hell. "The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." Luke 16: 22, 23. It is outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 25: 30. It is fire that shall never be quenched, where their worm dieth not. "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Mark 9: 43, 44. It is eternal damnation. "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." Mark 3: 29. It is to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven

with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." 2 Thess. 1: 7—10. It is the wrath of God. "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3: 36. "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." Rev. 14: 10. It is a lake of fire. "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20: 13—15.

From this full and terrific description of the doom awaiting impenitent sinners in another world, you can see the nature of that death to which you are exposed, and must be convinced, I think, that your solicitude respecting it is not without foundation. In this description there is no exaggeration; it is a simple statement of truths, known to the infinite God, a being of boundless knowledge and inviolable veracity. From this disclosure of truth we see why, in Scripture, the Holy Spirit, when addressing the sinner, speaks in language so full of intensity as the following: "Flee from the wrath to come" — "Lay hold on eternal life" — "Strive to enter in at the strait gate" — "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?" Were the sufferings, to which you are exposed, to continue only a million years, there would be a sufficient reason why you should feel far greater solicitude respecting

it than you now discover; but when you reflect, that, after as many millions of ages have rolled away, as there are stars in the sky, and drops of water in the ocean, and particles of dust in the world, your misery, should you die unpardoned, will only have just commenced, and that *eternity* will still be stamped upon the awful scene before you, you may well ask, with the trembling solicitude of the jailer, or the intense anxiety of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, "What shall I do to be saved?"

Reflect, moreover, that to this world of unextinguishable fire you are as near as you are to death, and death may overtake you at any moment; "for what is your life? It is even a vapor, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

It is important here to remark, that the anxiety you feel for your personal safety is not salvation. An individual may be greatly alarmed in prospect of impending danger, and yet not escape the calamity which

threatens him. A person upon a battle-field may be filled with terror in view of the instruments of death which are hurled thickly around him, and yet not escape them. His alarm will be of service to him only so far as it induces him to hasten to a place of security. And so it will prove with you. Your anxiety for salvation will avail you nothing, unless it impel you to flee to Christ for pardon and safety.

A young man, who professed to believe that all will be saved, suddenly exclaimed, "Hell, hell, hell! O! I am going to hell!" This he continued to do, from day to day, until, sinking beneath the pressure of his distress, his voice was hushed in death. God opened his eyes upon the destruction which awaited him; he saw it, and was terrified. Although directed to Christ for salvation, and repeatedly urged to look to him for pardon, he still lingered in his sins, and died, apparently without hope and without forgiveness.

From this example take warning; for

you may be greatly alarmed, and yet sink to perdition. It is not enough to be awakened ; you must cry for pardon. It is not enough to be anxious for your soul ; you must humble yourself before God, and confess and forsake your sins, that you may have mercy. It is not enough to be alarmed in view of impending wrath ; you must hasten to Christ for refuge, and trust for salvation in him who is “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

Although alarm is not that kind of conviction which immediately precedes forgiveness, it is, nevertheless, a state of mind far more hopeful than total indifference. While you remain stupid, you will neither discover your danger, nor make an effort to escape it ; but if alarmed, you may do both. While stupid, you will not realize your guilt ; but if alarmed, you may be led to discover the enormity of transgression. While stupid, you will not feel your need of pardon ; but if alarmed, you may be induced to cry for mercy. While stu-

pid, you will indulge the pride of your heart; but if alarmed, you may be constrained to humble yourself before God, and in doing it receive forgiveness. While stupid, you will not go to Christ; but if alarmed, you may be led to look on him whom you have pierced, and mourn. While stupid, you will not become reconciled to God; but if alarmed, you may be induced sweetly to bow to his authority, and be freely pardoned and justified by his grace.

A profane man and a Sabbath-breaker, being naturally passionate and a great opposer to religion, was exceedingly mad against a revival, with which the town where he resided was mercifully visited. Returning one Sabbath from a visit to an adjoining town, his opposition to the work of God was greatly excited by hearing of new instances of conversion. At evening he took up his little child, and sung, —

“Life is the time to serve the Lord,
The time to insure the great reward.”

When he had sung thus far, he thought a

voice said to him, "Thou awful wretch, thou hast spent all thy life in sin." The next moment he exclaimed, "I am sinking into hell." His wife caught the child from his arms, and his pious, aged parents, hearing his dreadful cries, hastened to the spot, and observing his great distress, while he continued to exclaim, "I am sinking into hell," they knelt by his side, and besought the great God, for Christ's sake, to have mercy upon their guilty son, who, while he deserved only indignation and wrath, now felt the need of his pardoning grace. In about half an hour he ceased his agonizing cry, and began to weep like a subdued child. In the morning he rose, read his Bible, erected his family altar, and, with a contrite heart, offered upon it the sacrifice of prayer and praise. In this example, you see distressing alarm speedily followed by contrition of spirit and quiet submission to the will of God. With this fact before you, and the case of the jailer, who, in his distress, fell trembling at the apostles' feet, cease not to plead for mercy,

until, with a broken heart, you can rest sweetly upon the bosom of Jesus, and exclaim with believing Thomas, "My Lord and my God."

CHAPTER II.

IMPORTANT HINTS TO AWAKENED SINNERS.

Let him that readeth understand. Mark 13: 14.

As awakened sinners are in danger of resisting the Holy Spirit and losing his convicting operations, I shall here offer a few words of caution. It is important, then, that you clearly understand, and deeply feel, that your condition is peculiarly critical. It is by no means certain, though you are convicted, that you will be pardoned and saved; that point is yet to be proved. Conviction is not conversion; solicitude for one's self is not unconditional submission to God. Many, very many, have been convicted of sin, have been in great distress for their souls, have sighed and wept, have prayed, read the Bible, attended meetings of religious inquiry, and asked, with solici-

tude, what they should do to be saved, who have not repented nor received pardon. They resisted the Spirit, they lost his convicting operations, and relapsed into a state of stupidity and hardness of heart, from which, perhaps, they were never awakened, until death broke their slumbers, and hurried them to the bar of God. You, too, are in danger, in great danger, of pursuing the same course with the same fatal result. Of this I wish you to be fully apprized. Be willing to know the worst of your case; it can do you no harm; it may prove to you an unspeakable blessing. Your soul is inconceivably precious, and its salvation a matter of infinite moment.

You must give your earnest, prayerful attention to this subject. Fitful anxiety is not what you need. You must think, and think calmly, closely, solemnly; the subject demands it. You must feel, too, and deeply feel, that you are in danger, in imminent danger, of resisting the Spirit and losing your present impressions. The Holy Ghost is mild, gentle, and easily grieved;

beware that you resist not his operations and provoke his departure. Yielding your whole heart to his impressions, plead earnestly that he will work in you with mighty power ; dread his departure, as you would the announcement of your final doom. Should the Spirit leave you, you would have no more true conviction, you would neither repent, nor bow to Christ, nor take a step in the way to heaven. Look carefully to your thoughts and pursuits, take heed to your conversation, be careful with whom you associate. You must act, and act decidedly, but act right and in the fear of God. You are awakened, — your case is therefore hopeful ; you have encouragement not to remain as you are, but to go forward to the mercy-seat and to the cross of Christ. If convinced of sin, and in earnest for pardon, you will be humble and teachable — you will be anxious to receive instruction upon experimental and practical religion. I invite your attention, therefore, to the following considerations.

1. All true religion is based upon a correct knowledge of God and his government, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. For want of this, darkness has covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. The errors and delusions which have distracted the church, and the disorder which sometimes attends revivals of religion, result mainly from this source. Awakened sinners often grope in darkness, and are perplexed at every step, either for the want of proper instruction, or from inattention to the sources of information within their reach. The light shines, but their eyes are closed upon it; the truth is revealed, but they neglect to search it out. A man, in pursuit of an immense treasure, deposited for him in a distant land, will take special pains to learn the geography of the country, to ascertain the best course to be pursued, the trials and obstacles to be encountered, and will furnish himself with all the means requisite for the attainment of his object. His success will depend very much upon his knowledge and his

application of it in the execution of his purpose. As you are awakened by the Spirit, and are, I trust, in earnest to secure your eternal salvation, — a treasure infinitely more precious to you than earth's accumulated wealth, — it is highly important that you should obtain, as far as practicable, a correct knowledge of the eternal, self-existent, independent, and unchangeable Jehovah, of his holiness and hatred of sin, his justice in punishing it, his wisdom, power, and love as displayed in the plan of redemption, and his truth and faithfulness in the administration of his government. Labor to get a clear view of the character and work of Christ, as God manifest in the flesh, his atonement, mediation, intercession, ability and willingness to save, and of all these combined, as the ground of your acceptance with God. The character and work of the Spirit, too, who enlightens, subdues, quickens, regenerates, reconciles the soul to God, and sanctifies it for the heavenly state, demand your serious and prayerful attention. Strive to get a clear

knowledge of yourself—not only of your actual transgressions, secret and open, and your sins of omission, which are, perhaps, not less criminal, but of your original depravity, the entire corruption of your moral nature, a view of which in himself constrained the Psalmist to exclaim, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me,” and which occasioned the declaration in Ezekiel, “A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” The law of God, repentance, regeneration, justification by faith through the righteousness of Christ, which consists in his perfect obedience to the divine law, and his atoning sufferings and death, as our substitute, are subjects which properly come within your anxious inquiries. Labor, also, to get a clear view of the evil of sin. What was it which drove Adam and Eve from their blissful garden? What was it which deluged the world with a flood of waters, and swept its guilty inhabitants to destruction? What brought down upon Sodom and Gomorrah a storm

of fire? What has convulsed empires and desolated cities? What crucified the Son of God? What has occasioned all the misery which has been experienced from the fall of Adam to the present hour? What has occasioned the woes of the second death? Sin, sin; and to escape it, we may well put forth our unceasing and most vigorous efforts.

2. Beware that you mistake not the design of the Spirit, nor slight his operations by setting a low estimate upon his work. He comes to deliver you from the bondage of corruption, to make you a son and an heir of God, a king and a priest in his upper temple, and to put you ultimately in full possession of "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" in the presence of God and the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. This, to you, is an unspeakable blessing—learn, then, to estimate it by its intrinsic excellence, as well as by the blood of Jesus, which purchased it, and the character of that divine agent, who labors to make you a partaker

of the unmerited and sovereign grace of God.

3. Guard against any constitutional tendencies to pride and ambition, to anger, fretfulness, and the gratification of unhallowed lusts and passions. Avoid idle and vain conversation, light reading, parties of pleasure, and vain amusements. Covet not worldly honors and distinctions. All these are hostile to the work of the Spirit.

4. Resist not the Spirit by concealing your convictions. Such conduct reflects great dishonor upon this divine agent, and is exceedingly offensive to God. It has checked in many a bosom those awakening operations which, had they been cherished, might have resulted in salvation. There is nothing in religion or its Author, or in the work of securing it, of which we ought to be ashamed. We may well be ashamed of our sins, but never of the fact that we are about to forsake them. If you would secure salvation, you must rise above the fear of man, and the opposition and sneers of the ungodly. Peace in believing is

rarely, if ever, obtained until this obstacle is surmounted. It matters little what wicked men or devils think of us, if the infinite God approve our conduct. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matt. 10: 28. The three thousand on the day of Pentecost did not resist the Spirit by concealing their convictions. They were not afraid to have it known that they were anxious to secure salvation. The convicted jailer did not hesitate to disclose his anxiety to the apostles, and to ask what he should do to be saved. The awakened eunuch freely confessed his ignorance to Philip, and cheerfully received his instructions respecting the way of salvation. "He that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." John 3: 21. You cannot obtain and enjoy true religion, without imparting the knowledge of the fact to others. The pearl of great price is too

valuable to be wrapped up in a napkin, and laid away as useless. The lamp of salvation, when lighted in the soul, cannot be concealed under a bushel. The religion of Jesus, to accumulate, must be diffusive; the more we give away, the more we have. If you are favored with the convicting power of the Holy Ghost, thank God and honor his Spirit by cherishing his gracious influences. Disclose your feelings freely to your pastor, or to some experienced Christian, who is able to guide you in the way of life. If the pride of your heart rise in opposition, crush it at once and go forward. Pride must be subdued, or you must lie down in despair forever. Perhaps your pastor has a special meeting for anxious inquirers; if so, attend it. Pray before you go, pray on your way to the meeting, and pray while you are there, that the Holy Spirit may unfold to you the plan of redemption, and reveal Christ in your soul the hope of glory. If you have perplexities, disclose them. A few minutes' conversation with one who is skilled in

directing souls to Christ, may be of greater service to you than hours of religious reading. Meetings, too, for prayer and exhortation, if properly conducted, you will find of special service. They are calculated to deepen religious impressions, where they exist, and to lead even the thoughtless to serious reflection.

5. As the Bible is the best book, so it is the first book, which awakened sinners should read, and it should be perused by them more than all others. It is the word of God, the sword of the Spirit, that penetrates the heart. Here you will find truth without error, day without night, and a full-orbed sun without a cloud. Read portions of Scripture every day, particularly in the New Testament, Psalms, Isaiah, and the minor prophets. Read the Bible with close attention and great solemnity. Read it, too, with self-application, and remember it was written for you in particular, as well as for others. Pray over the Bible, pray often and fervently, that God, by his Spirit, will enable you to understand its truths

and feel their power. I charge you not to neglect this duty. If you are troubled with skepticism, this is the way to remove it. Reading the Bible carelessly, without prayer, is the direct way to grieve the Spirit and become an infidel. If you cannot comprehend the whole of divine truth, you can understand enough of it to learn the way to heaven. As you become wiser and holier, you will understand it better.

6. Give close and serious attention to the gospel, whether preached upon the Sabbath or on other occasions. This is a point of great importance. Divine truth, when clearly exhibited and faithfully pressed home upon the heart and conscience, is calculated to deepen religious impressions. Go not from one religious meeting to another in pursuit of novelties. An itching ear is a dangerous thing, and, if gratified, will retard, if not entirely obstruct, the work of the Spirit. Your object should be to find Christ, not novelties; and Christ may be found where the gospel is faithfully preached and attentively heard. If you

are now blessed with a spiritual minister, attend steadily upon his ministrations; if not, select a godly man as your pastor, and let his house of worship be your home on the Sabbath.

7. As you are in pursuit of salvation, you must fully decide to withdraw yourself from wicked associates. Their company and conversation are destructive to religious impressions. You cannot follow Christ and Belial; the two are entirely opposed. On this point you must act with great decision. "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not." So long as you are unwilling to forsake the company of the wicked, you are unwilling to follow Christ. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6: 17, 18.

8. Allow me still further to say, that, in seeking religion, you should never yield to discouragement and despondency. Such

feelings are disastrous to energetic and successful action. There is no occasion for them. If God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, in their respective offices in the work of redemption, are engaged for your salvation, you have ample reasons for encouragement. Are your sins numberless and great? The blood of Jesus Christ is available and efficacious to purge away their guilt. "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1: 7. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. 1: 18. Is your heart hard? The fire and hammer of the Spirit can break and dissolve it. Is your mind dark? The divine Comforter can illuminate it. Do mountains of difficulty appear in your path? The Holy Spirit can remove them. He will level mountains and fill up valleys, and make for you a way to the cross. It is surprising to see how difficulties vanish when a sinner, in earnest for salvation, is willing to cast himself upon the mercy of

God, and go forward. Saul of Tarsus and the thief on the cross, though great sinners, did not yield to despondency. They looked to Christ at once and in earnest, and obtained pardon. God, the Father, is willing to save you. For your encouragement he says, "Look unto me and be ye saved." Isa. 45: 22. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." Hos. 13: 9. Christ, the Mediator, is your advocate in the court of heaven. "He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Isa. 53: 12. The Holy Spirit is striving to make you willing and obedient, that you may find rest to your soul. Talk not, then, of discouragement, nor for a moment yield to despondency, while the Three that bear record in heaven are engaged for your salvation. Ruined as you are by sin, you must look away from your guilty self to the unchanging God. His power and love are infinite, and his mercy and grace abounding. Up, then, and by repentance and faith work out your salvation, while

God is working in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

9. Awakened sinners sometimes labor under an apprehension that they have passed the day of grace, or committed the unpardonable sin, and are thus hindered in their way to Christ. But such fears are evidently groundless, for the Holy Spirit would not strive with one for whom there was no possibility of pardon. Those who have passed the day of grace, or committed the unpardonable sin, are generally characterized by blockish stupidity, great hardness of heart, or bitter opposition to evangelical truth, and contempt for the means of grace. Satan will strive to make you believe that your sins are too great to be forgiven; that the day of mercy is over; that the way of life is too difficult to find, and too strait and unpleasant to pursue; or that, to you, heaven is lost forever. In these and kindred ways, he will labor either to quiet your fears, or to plunge you into hopeless despair. All such suggestions you must steadfastly resist, as coming from the

father of lies, who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Let the purpose of your heart be,

“I’ll go to Jesus, though my sin
Hath like a mountain rose ;
I know his courts ; I’ll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.

“I can but perish, if I go ;
I am resolved to try,
For if I stay away, I know
I must forever die.”

In a religious meeting, favored with tokens of the divine presence, I remarked, for the encouragement of such as wished to obtain salvation, that all present might undoubtedly receive forgiveness, if they would seek it in earnest ; for I could not think that any one, who had committed the unpardonable sin, would be inclined to meet with the people of God, to unite with them in his worship.

A lady present, who for years had been in a despairing state, from an impression that her day of grace was over, dwelt upon that thought with great interest. It

appeared to her so reasonable, that, overcoming her feelings of despair, and having resolved to seek salvation, she tarried with the inquirers to ask what she should do to be saved. In a short time, guided by the Holy Spirit, she was enabled cheerfully to surrender her heart to Christ; she found peace and pardon, and saw in Jesus that fulness and all-sufficiency which made him, to her, the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely. As she followed on to know the Lord, her faith and hope were established, and she went on her way rejoicing.

If, then, you are awakened by the Holy Spirit, and feel inclined to read the Bible, and meet with the people of God for religious instruction, and are anxious to find the way of life, you may rest assured that you have not committed the unpardonable sin, but should go immediately to Jesus, that you may be pardoned and justified, and "have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

10. Some awakened sinners mistake

both the nature and design of conviction, and are thus retarded in their way to Christ. They suppose that they must pass through a long season of mental anxiety ; must continue, for weeks together, in great distress and anguish of spirit, to make a kind of atonement for sin, and thus prepare the way for God to accept them. But such impressions are incorrect, and should immediately be relinquished. The design of conviction is not to atone for sin, but to bring the sinner to Christ. No amount of suffering which he can endure in the present life can meet the demands of divine justice. Could you live for a million years in a fire as intense as that which consumed John Rogers at the stake, it would not atone for a single sin. The atonement which God requires is infinite, and Christ has made it ; your duty is to trust in it immediately, and then for Jesus's sake you will be pardoned and accepted. The period of conviction may be very short, and yet answer the divine purpose. In convincing you of sin, God seeks not

your distress but your repentance; not your suffering for transgression, but your contrition for it; not a righteousness which you can make, but the acceptance of that which Christ has wrought for you.

A young man once observed to me, that he was convicted and converted under one sermon. He saw his sins, was sorry for them, resolved to forsake them, repented, accepted Christ as his Saviour, and found peace. He has for years given as good evidence of genuine piety as those converted during the same revival, who continued for days and weeks in the deepest distress.

The conviction and anxiety of the jailer lasted but a few minutes. When Christ was presented to him, he accepted him at once as his surety, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. The distress of awakened sinners on the day of Pentecost was of short duration. Christ was presented to them as the object of their trust, and, looking to him by faith, they at once received him as the Lord their righteousness.

11. It is not desirable that those who are seeking religion should suspend their ordinary employment, provided that employment be such as God approves. To think intensely and without cessation upon a subject so absorbing as the soul's salvation, is exhausting both to the mind and body, and in some constitutions produces a nervous excitement exceedingly deleterious in its consequences. You will find your regular, lawful employment, if properly pursued, a help rather than a hinderance to you, in seeking salvation. It will afford relief to the mind, and that kind of relief essential to its most vigorous and successful action. If religion can be enjoyed in the highest degree, as it evidently may, in connection with the faithful discharge of our secular duties, why may it not also be obtained while engaged in the discharge of those duties? An idle or indolent person is far less likely to obtain the pearl of great price, even if he seeks it, than one who has been trained to habits of industry and activity. Indolence is offensive to

God, and grieves the Spirit. You can repent and believe in Christ in the shop, field, or counting-room, any where and every where in the lawful pursuits of life. You are to live in the daily exercise of sincere repentance for sin and a vigorous faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAW OF GOD.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. Matt. 22: 37, 38.

It is very important that the awakened sinner should have a correct knowledge of the divine law and his relations to it, for "by the law is the knowledge of sin." The depth, pungency, and genuineness of conviction will ordinarily be in proportion to the clearness of his views of this fundamental principle in the divine government. The law of God, then, is briefly expressed by our Saviour in those two great precepts, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Matt. 22: 37, 39. It requires the intelli-

gent universe to love Jehovah unceasingly, and to the extent of their powers, for all those glorious perfections imbodied in his character ; and to love all other beings in proportion as they bear the moral impress of their Creator.

This law is *spiritual*. It reaches the inner man, and is violated by an unholy thought, feeling, or motive, no less than by external actions. Impressed with the spirituality of this divine precept, an apostle declares, "The law is spiritual ; but I am carnal, sold under sin." Rom. 7 : 14.

This law is *extensive*. It lays its claim upon all, of every age, and sex, and rank, and nation, who have ever lived or ever will live, till the world shall be consumed. The law of God extends to other worlds. Saints and angels in heaven bow to its authority, and will delight to obey it perfectly through the whole range of their endless existence. Fallen spirits, too, in the world of despair, are under this law. Disobedience has neither destroyed moral obligation nor annihilated their power to do right.

The law of God is *holy*. Like its infinite Author, it shines out in the beauty of holiness, and reflects the perfect image of uncreated excellence. In view of the unsullied purity of the divine precepts, an apostle exclaims, "Wherefore the law is holy ; and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Rom. 7: 12. The Psalmist also expresses the same sentiment. "The law of the Lord is perfect ; the statutes of the Lord are right ; the commandment of the Lord is pure." Ps. 19: 7, 8.

The law of God is *reasonable*. It is reasonable that moral beings should be holy and happy ; that they should love their Creator supremely, obey him perfectly, and be in a condition to receive and impart the highest possible good. All this the law of God requires, and if perfectly obeyed, will invariably accomplish. It is designed to make the universe unspeakably and eternally happy. Perfect obedience to it, fills heaven with uninterrupted loyalty and bliss. A law, so holy in its nature, and securing to the universe the highest con-

ceivable good, is not only reasonable, but is, in fact, the perfection of reason.

The law of God is *just*. It renders to all their due. It secures to God his honor, and to all his creatures their rights. "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Rev. 15: 3.

The law of God is *perpetual in its obligations*. Its demands and prohibitions are ever the same. What it requires of a moral being now, it will require of him to all eternity. "Think not," says our Saviour, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Matt. 5: 17. And an apostle reasons, "Do we, then, make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." Rom. 3: 31. "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." Ps. 119: 89.

The law of God is *penal*. The penalty annexed to the divine law is endless death, which the impenitent will experience in the future world, including the loss of heavenly blessedness and the pains of hell forever.

“The wages of sin is death.” Rom. 6: 23.

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Ezek. 18: 4.

This law you are under, and from its obligations you can never be released. It requires you to love God with all your heart; but this you have not done, for “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Rom. 3: 23. As you have sinned by violating the divine law, you are, if impenitent, liable to experience its tremendous penalty, for “cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” Gal. 3: 10.

It is important to have a clear idea of what is meant by violation of law. The apostle John has defined sin to be “transgression of the law.” He does not say that twenty sins, merely, are a transgression of the law, but *sin*, *one* sin, is a violation of the divine law. The man who withholds supreme affection from God one minute, as really violates the law of God as he who withholds it twenty minutes. One

act of disobedience is as really and properly sin, as twenty acts of disobedience. One sin, indeed, is not so criminal as twenty sins, but it is on that account no less sin. The person who withholds supreme affection from God one minute, as effectually excludes himself from the kingdom of heaven on the ground of legal justification, as he who withholds affection from God ten years, or ten million years; for sin, *one sin*, is a transgression of the law, and God declares, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." You perceive, therefore, that one act of disobedience is a violation of God's law, and deserves its penalty, and that each specific act of disobedience in each moment of an impenitent life deserves the same tremendous penalty. Look, then, at past sins. If you are now unconverted, they are as numerous as the moments of your accountable existence, and each of them deserves everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. In view, then, of your condition as an unpardoned sinner, you may

well be alarmed, and ask, with the anxious jailer, "What shall I do to be saved?" And now, trembling as a transgressor beneath the quakings of Sinai, where this law was delivered, I point you to Christ crucified as your hiding-place from the endless and fearful penalty of God's violated law. "His blood cleanseth us from all sin." He is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," and the only refuge for the sinner against the inflexible demands of divine justice —

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee."

CHAPTER IV.

CONVICTION OF SIN.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Acts 2: 37.

CONVICTION of sin always precedes regeneration, and arises from a view of our relations to the law of God. The three thousand, on the day of Pentecost, were pricked in their heart, or convicted of sin, before they asked what they should do to be saved, or found peace in believing. The prodigal son was convinced that he had done wrong in spending his time and property in riotous living, before he returned to his father's house and made confession. This will be found substantially true of every returning penitent. He must be made sensible that he is wandering from the right way before he will change his

course. Conviction of sin is the work of the Holy Spirit, and on this divine agent we must rely to disclose to us our guilt, and lead us to Christ for pardon.

The convicted sinner should labor to get a clear and impressive view of the character and law of God; of his relations to that law; and of the nature and criminality of sin, as well as of its endless and fearful consequences in the coming world. There is a class of awakened sinners who are anxious, not because they have sinned and offended God, but on account of threatened punishment. Could they certainly know that there were no deathless worm and unquenchable fire as the portion of the ungodly, their anxiety would cease, and they would continue to sin with the same unconcern as before. An awakened sinner, being asked whether he should have much solicitude about himself if there were no hell, replied, in effect, that he should not; and such replies are not unfrequent in the early stages of religious thoughtfulness. I knew an individual who, in passing to her

home, is said to have stopped suddenly and cried aloud, because, as she observed, she saw hell open before her and herself sinking into it. But when these vivid impressions had passed away, her anxiety ceased, and she could disobey God and trample upon the blood of Jesus with the same indifference as before. Now, it is evident that the cause of her distress was not sin, but liability to suffering. When I met her, several years after, she was apparently indifferent, though in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity.

Anxiety, or conviction, arising merely from this source, will not result in saving conversion. It is right, indeed, that the sinner should know, and deeply feel, that there is a hell as endless and as dreadful as the Word of God declares it to be, for this is one way in which we discover the criminality of sin. It is proper that motives drawn from this source should be urged upon him to impel him to flee from the wrath to come. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." 2

Cor. 5: 11. "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. 33: 11. It is probable that the attention of most convicted sinners is first awakened by an apprehension of danger, and it is quite natural that such should be alarmed, and even tremble, in view of their exposure to divine indignation. But before the heart is changed, these feelings give place to a sense of sin, because it is wrong in its nature and tendency, opposed to God and his government, and deserving his endless frowns. The burden and confession of the Prodigal were, "Father, I have sinned," and the Publican, under a deep consciousness of guilt, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." These were cases of genuine conviction, and in both of them, sin committed, seen, and felt, was the principal burden which pressed upon the soul.

I once asked a convicted sinner whether it was sin, or the fear of hell, which distressed him. "O," replied he, in substance,

“I have scarcely thought of hell. My sins distress me; I have offended God and abused his goodness and mercy all my days.” His views were no doubt correct, and such views are calculated to humble the transgressor in the dust, lead him to confess his sins, and cry for mercy.

It is not punishment which gives to sin its criminality. Sin is wrong in itself, and would be so were there no future punishment, and it should be hated and forsaken on this account. It is wrong to steal and commit murder, and would be so were there no state prison and gallows awaiting the transgressor. Sin reflects great dishonor upon God, and is a violation of infinite obligations; it dishonors Christ, the Mediator, hinders the work of the Spirit, and, if not restrained in its operations, it would annihilate the moral government of Jehovah, and fill creation with universal misrule. It is, therefore, an infinite evil, and God and holy beings abhor it on this account, and so should you.

Do you now ask how you may *know*

whether or not your convictions are genuine? To this I reply, if your sins appear to you odious and dreadful, and if you desire above all things to be delivered from their polluting and reigning power; if it pains you to the heart that you have violated the law of God in thought, word, and deed, and in numberless instances abused his mercy and love; if you are filled with anxiety because you have crucified the Son of God and often resisted the Spirit of grace; if your past life seems to you an unbroken series of transgression, and your sins so heinous in the sight of God as to deserve the endless death threatened in his Word; if you feel that the law and government of God are right, and that he would be just should he exclude you, on account of your disobedience, from his heavenly presence, and shut you up in the prison of despair forever, your convictions are genuine, and, if wisely improved, will result in saving conversion to God.

Awakened sinners are sometimes hindered, in their way to Christ, from an ap-

prehension that their convictions are not sufficiently pungent. They have not that deep distress and overwhelming anxiety, which others appear to have, and therefore conclude that their views of sin are materially defective. They are waiting for some wonderful discovery or overwhelming sense of their guilt and danger, which shall crush them to the dust before they repent and believe in Jesus. Now, all such waiting is sinful. Knowingly to pursue a wrong or wicked course till justice, with a drawn sword, appears in your path to execute vengeance, is rebellion against God. You would think a man insane, who, knowing his house to be on fire, should wait till he should himself be enveloped in flames, before he made an effort to escape. And is the sinner less unreasonable, who, knowing that he is in the way to hell, shall wait till its fires flash in his face, before he attempts to find a refuge in Jesus? It is not for the sinner to dictate when, or how, the Holy Spirit shall work, or what amount of conviction he shall awaken in

the mind. Some are more stupid and stubborn than others, and require more divine influence to rouse them to action and constrain them to bow. If convinced by the Holy Spirit that you have sinned against God, and are in the broad way to death, you should stop immediately, change your course, yield to his heavenly guidance, and enter at once the way of life. If you discover but one sin, repent of that, and let every new discovery of native depravity, or actual transgression, be attended with deep, godly sorrow. The depth and genuineness of conviction cannot always be ascertained by the external distress which may accompany it. As we are differently constituted and educated, some will express far more than others under the same amount of conviction. If convinced by the Spirit that you are an unpardoned sinner, passing onward to a fearful and wasteless eternity, your duty is plain. You should go immediately to God, and, from the depths of penitential sorrow, say with the Prodigal, "Father, I have sinned."

You should go directly to Christ, and, feeling your guilt and unworthiness, make a full and final surrender of yourself to him, and by an act of faith receive him as the Lord your righteousness, and cling to him as your almighty Deliverer.

CHAPTER V.

GOD IN CHRIST THE SINNER'S REFUGE.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Ps. 46: 1

SINNERS who are awakened by the Holy Ghost, and alarmed in view of their guilt and danger, feel their need of a refuge. Their first inquiry is, "What shall I do to be saved?" To all such, whether slightly impressed or nearly overwhelmed with a sense of sin, the following remarks may not be inappropriate.

God in Christ is the sinner's refuge. He is the great Creator and sovereign Proprietor of all things. He said to Abraham, "I am the Almighty God." Gen. 17: 1. "His arm is not shortened, that it cannot save." All worlds and all events are at his disposal. Wicked men and devils are in his hands

He wounds and heals, he kills and makes alive, at his pleasure. His power is infinite. You see, therefore, that in respect to strength, your refuge is adequate to your wants.

Another important circumstance connected with the sinner's refuge is, that it is near at hand. A man pursued by an enemy, will task his powers to the uttermost to save his life if he discovers just before him an impregnable and accessible fortress. God in Christ, the sinner's refuge, is not only omnipotent to save, but accessible and near, "a very present help in trouble." He is "not far from every one of us, for in him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17: 27, 28. You are encircled with his presence; and when, with a contrite spirit, you cast your burdened soul upon his infinite arm, you will hear him say, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God." Isaiah 41: 10. This great Deliverer is near to bless and to save, when, with a filial spirit, you read the Bible, enter your closet to

pray, bow around the family altar, or go out, as did Isaac, at eventide, to meditate. He is near to pardon and comfort when you meet for prayer in the social circle, or enter his holy sanctuary to receive instruction.

God is not only near the trembling sinner, but he is willing to save. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezek. 33: 11. To all who are distressed in view of sin, Jehovah proclaims, "Look unto me, and be ye saved; for I am God, and there is none else." Isaiah 45: 22. He said to his ancient people, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." Hosea 13: 9.

God, moreover, is merciful, and compassionate, and tenderly kind. He proclaims himself to be "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious." Ex. 34: 6. He is also ready to forgive. He freely pardons sinners of all nations. He takes so much pleasure in bestowing pardon that he even invites and entreats the sinner to ask for it.

He pardons all classes ; the young and the old ; the slave and his master ; the poor and illiterate no less than the wealthy and the learned. God pardons many and great sins, and sins of peculiar aggravation. He pardoned the sins of Manasseh, Saul of Tarsus, and Peter, and he will pardon your sins, if, like them, you cherish a contrite spirit. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. 1: 18. God, in the atonement of Christ, makes provision for the pardon of future sins. He justifies as well as pardons, and treats his pardoned ones, for Jesus's sake, as righteous in his sight. God pardons upon the most reasonable conditions ; and these conditions are, repentance for sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. God not only pardons upon the most reasonable conditions, but even assists the sinner by the operations of the Holy Spirit to fulfil these conditions. God is boundless in resources, and is both able and willing to supply your wants.

This infinite being, holy and just, and hating sin as he does, you, though a great transgressor, and unworthy of the least of all his mercies, can meet in Christ as your gracious Father and unfailing Friend. Through Christ, the Mediator, you can draw near to him at all times, spread out your wants, confess your sins, and receive from him pardon, hope, eternal life, and blessedness before his throne. Such is the sinner's hiding-place from the endless and fearful penalty of God's violated law.

CHAPTER VI.

DECISION IN RELIGION.

Choose you this day whom ye will serve. Josh. 24: 15.

DECISION is no less essential to success in seeking salvation than in prosecuting any worldly enterprise. The mind never acts efficiently in the pursuit of wealth, honor, pleasure, any real or imaginary good, until it acts decidedly. If, then, as a convicted sinner, you desire immediately to enter the way of life, you must, relying upon divine assistance, come now to a full, deliberate, and unalterable determination to devote yourself entirely and forever to the service of God. Under an impressive sense of your weakness and dependence, you must make this decision in the strength of God, and in full view of the sins to be relinquished, the trials to be endured, and the

duties of practical piety to be performed to the end of life. It is not enough partially to decide on this subject ; a partial decision is no decision. Nor is it sufficient to resolve that at some future period religion shall be your chief concern ; many have done this, and lost their souls. To defer submission to Christ to a future time, is to conclude, for the present, to rebel against God. On a subject so momentous as the endless well-being of your precious soul, you must, with the utmost sincerity, say with the Psalmist, "O God, my heart is fixed," and, like him, carry out immediately this unchangeable purpose in a life of daily repentance, faith, and prayer. Until such a determination is formed, you will make no progress towards God and heaven. The Prodigal did not return to his father's house till he decided to do it. Having formed a deliberate and solemn purpose to go home, he executed it immediately ; he rose and went to his father. Nor did he act without good and sufficient reasons in this matter. In view of his own guilt and

wretchedness, and the known kindness of his father, his ability and willingness to help him, he resolved to go home and cast himself upon the mercy of his grieved and dishonored parent. This is a happy illustration of correct decision connected with immediate and successful action in seeking salvation. It is an illustration given by Christ himself, and may therefore be safely followed. You perceive, then, that the Prodigal's decision was, in an important sense, the turning-point in his salvation. Had he not decided to return home, he must have perished with starvation. He did not confer with flesh and blood in this matter; he neither lingered nor hesitated; he raised no objections, and yielded to no fears in regard to his reception. Like a man in earnest to save his life, he chose at once the best way, and, with becoming zeal, pursued it. From considerations unspeakably more weighty, you are urged to decide *now* to enter, with all your heart, upon a life of piety. Like the Prodigal, you have wandered from your Father's house;

you have forsaken the Lord your Maker, and lightly esteemed the Rock of your salvation. You have enjoyed divine goodness, and abused it; you have lived through divine forbearance, and have slighted it. The warnings and threatenings, the invitations and kind entreaties, of your Father in heaven you have disregarded. Pardon—full, free, and purchased by the blood of Jesus—you have treated with contempt. Your sins are numberless, great, and aggravated beyond expression, because committed against such clear displays of the boundless goodness and grace of God. You are a condemned transgressor, passing on to judgment and fiery indignation which must devour the ungodly. Endless misery is before you, and you are liable to sink into it at any moment while unpardoned. “He that believeth not shall be damned.” Mark 16: 16. A storm of divine wrath is hanging over you, and will beat upon you with untold and accumulated violence, unless you find a refuge in Jesus. Why, then, do you linger? If Noah hastened

into the ark to escape the flood, and Lot fled from the flames of Sodom, you may well be in earnest to escape the flood of divine wrath, and the lake of unquenchable fire. "He that believeth shall be saved." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Nor let it be thought presumptuous for a sinner to decide on a point pertaining to his salvation. It is, indeed, the very thing which God requires. He rebuked his ancient people for their indecision. "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him." He urged them to an immediate choice of himself as their chief good. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." It is not presumption for a sinner to obey God and secure his own salvation. Others have decided to forsake their sins, and live a life of faith and prayer, and you may follow their example.

In a meeting of special religious interest, I once asked if any one present would, like

the prodigal, arise and go to his father. To my surprise, a middle-aged man, who had been a great sinner, arose, and said, in a low, trembling voice, "I will arise and go to my Father," and sat down. It was, with him, a moment of great interest; his purpose was fixed; he resolved, with divine help, to abandon his wicked ways and become a follower of Jesus. Burdened with a sense of his guilt, he went home, and sought a retired place in which to pour out his complaint before God. His convictions were pungent, but of short duration. I heard him sigh in his distress, as he fell upon his knees by my side, and cried for mercy. In a short time, heavenly light beamed upon his soul, and he sat penitently at the feet of Jesus. He became a devoted Christian. His determination to be on the side of Christ, you perceive, led to immediate and happy results.

A young man once entered my room without the least apparent concern for his salvation, though rationally convinced that he must be born again or be lost. I urged

him to seek religion immediately ; but he hesitated ; he was not quite ready. Again and again I entreated him, by all the considerations which I could draw from the Word of God, to devote himself, without delay, to the service of Christ ; but still he refused. Before he left, I made one more appeal, and said, in effect, “ Will you seek salvation now, with all your heart ? ” He replied, “ I think I will. ” He was a young man of decision of character ; his purpose was formed, and he knelt by my side while I commended him to God in prayer. The Holy Spirit blessed the effort ; he was immediately awakened, and the next day he was deeply concerned to know what he should do to be saved. In a few hours, he hopefully surrendered his heart to God, and found peace in believing. He appeared openly upon the side of Christ, and has continued to adorn the doctrines of God his Saviour by a holy life. Now, had not that young man concluded to make religion his first concern, he would have remained an enemy of God, and still trav-

elled on in the way to despair. Reflection, argument, and entreaty, accompanied with divine influence, brought him to a decision which speedily resulted in his hopeful conversion to God.

Since, then, awakened reader, God has granted you the convicting influences of his Spirit, I charge you by all that is precious in heavenly blessedness, and dreadful in the wrath to come, now to make a full and final committal of yourself to Jesus, and live, henceforth, not unto yourself, but unto Him who died for you, and rose again.

CHAPTER VII.

DEPENDENCE AND UNCONDITIONAL SUBMISSION.

And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Acts 9 : 6.

WHEN we speak of the sinner's helplessness, it is not to be understood that he is wanting in any natural power to do his duty, but that, having violated the law of God, and thereby involved himself in guilt and ruin, he is entirely dependent upon a divine and almighty agency to extricate him from his perilous condition, and so to renovate his soul that it shall completely harmonize with the will of God, and be prepared for a holy and blissful heaven.

With this preliminary remark, I observe, that as awakened sinners are inclined to trust in their own righteousness, and to feel that their prayers, anxieties, and efforts

will recommend them to the divine favor, a great point is gained, when they are thoroughly convinced, that as transgressors of God's law, they are utterly undone, that their own righteousness is filthy rags, that by nature and by practice they are entirely depraved, that in themselves there is no good thing, that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and that every imagination of the thought of the heart is only evil continually. This scriptural view of themselves, as condemned sinners under sentence of death, will lead them to realize their entire dependence, and to feel that if saved at all, they must be saved by the sovereign grace of God, bestowed freely through Jesus, the Mediator. The sinner must renounce his own righteousness as utterly worthless, before he will accept the righteousness of Christ; he must cease to depend upon himself before he will rely upon God for salvation; he must feel his entire helplessness as a guilty transgressor in the hands of God, and exposed to his wrath forever, before he will hasten for shelter to

the atoning blood of Jesus. The apostle Paul, speaking of himself, says, "I was alive without the law once ; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Rom. 7: 9. When he saw the spiritual nature, extent, and purity of God's law, sin revived, or he discovered his guilt as a transgressor of that law, and died at once and forever to the hope of being justified and saved by legal obedience. He was slain by the law before he began to live in Christ ; he was made to feel his entire helplessness as a condemned transgressor under sentence of eternal death, before he exclaimed in brokenness of heart, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" God humbles the sinner before he exalts him ; he strips him of his own righteousness before he clothes him with the righteousness of Christ ; he enables him to feel his entire weakness before he girds him with the strength of salvation ; he discovers to him his guilt and deformity before he discloses to him the beauty of holiness ; he allows him to taste the wormwood and

the gall before he gives him the cup of salvation; he makes him to feel his utter helplessness, as a sinner condemned to die, guilty, hopeless, and sinking under the pressure of his wrath, before he extends to him the arm of deliverance. All this he does to break his hold on sin and self, and every earthly dependence, and bring him into a state to receive pardon as a gratuitous favor, and ascribe the glory of his salvation to his infinite and sovereign grace.

An original but appropriate illustration of the sinner's dependence and helplessness, and God's treatment of him in this condition, was once given by an unlettered Indian, who, having taken a worm, laid him upon the ground, and, drawing a circle round him, kindled a fire upon its circumference. The worm crawled in all directions, and finding himself encircled by the consuming element, returned to the centre of the circle, to die. At this moment the Indian extended his arm, and, plucking him from his perilous condition, conveyed him to a place of safety. So it

is with the sinner. When, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, he discovers that within he is entirely depraved; that above him is an avenging God, and beneath him a burning hell; when, in his distress, he has wearied himself out with fruitless attempts to save himself, and is just ready to sink in hopeless despair, he casts himself, as an undone sinner, at the feet of a crucified Saviour, the central point of God's infinite goodness and matchless grace, and, relying simply and solely upon the mercy of his offended Creator, exclaims, "Lord, save me, or I perish." Then God extends to him the arm of deliverance, plucks him as a brand from the burning, purges away his guilt, and, having planted his feet upon the Rock of Ages, enables him to see that his salvation is purely of grace, and to ascribe the glory of it entirely and forever to God and the Lamb.

Reader, to this point you must be brought, or you must perish. Salvation begins here; your extremity is God's opportunity; upon him you are entirely dependent; he alone

can deliver; pardon and spiritual life are his gifts. When, despairing of help from all other sources, you look to him in earnest, and cry for mercy in your helplessness, you will realize in him a Saviour to the uttermost. God finds you when you lose yourself; the moment you die to sin, you live in Christ.

“The mount of danger is the place
Where we shall see surprising grace.”

Convicted sinners are inclined, also, to make conditions, upon which they will bow to the divine will, instead of submitting, as they should, unconditionally, to the authority of God. I once asked an anxious inquirer if she was willing to fall unconditionally into the hands of God. “O, no!” she replied, in effect, “for if I should, I fear he would send me to hell;” all the while forgetting that she was entirely in the power of her infinite Sovereign, who was able in a moment to crush her forever. Now, you perceive, she was making conditions. If she could know certainly

that God would save her, she would submit ; if not, she would continue to rebel. Persons under conviction are ready to do every thing but the right thing, to pursue any course except that which the Saviour approves. One would submit to God if he was thoroughly convicted of sin ; another would do it if he was worthy to be saved ; and a third would give up his heart if he was certain God would accept it. One class of persons would follow Christ if they could have religion and conceal it ; another would be very obedient if they certainly knew they were among the elect, or could have salvation and still indulge forbidden lusts. In these and kindred ways, anxious inquirers insult their Maker, resist his Spirit, and hedge up their way to heaven. This course must be abandoned or the transgressor must die. It ill becomes a sinner, under sentence of death, to dictate to his judge upon what conditions he will accept pardon ; or a rebel, overtaken by justice, to prescribe to his sovereign upon what terms he will submit and be loyal. If, reader,

you are anxious for salvation, but still impenitent, God is your righteous Judge, and you the culprit ; he is your independent Sovereign, and you the rebel ; he is in the right ; his character, law, and government, are just ; you are in the wrong—in heart and conduct—entirely wrong. God is unchangeable. On your part, therefore, unconditional submission or death is the only alternative. “Yield yourselves unto God,” is the divine command. The surrender which you are required to make, must be of body and soul ; friends, property, learning, influence, all must be sincerely and heartily surrendered to God. A partial surrender is no surrender ; God will have the whole or nothing ; he deserves it, and should he require less, it would prove your ruin. His choice must be your choice ; his will your will ; his pleasure your delight ; and his service your constant and endless employment.

Your surrender to God must be immediate. He requires and deserves your service now, and you sin if you withhold it.

Every moment's delay is attended with unspeakable hazard. While you linger, you may die and sink to perdition.

Your surrender to God must be voluntary and cheerful. A reluctant service God will not accept. "God loveth a cheerful giver." You must fall into his hands, not only cheerfully, but joyfully, and be willing that he should dispose of you and yours according to his sovereign pleasure.

Your surrender must be attended with holy love. As God possesses every possible excellence, you are required to love him with all your powers. It must be attended, also, with deep humiliation and sincere contrition for past sins, and a full, unshaken purpose to deny all ungodliness and every worldly lust.

You must submit to God in faith, with confidence in his being and perfections, the rectitude of his government, and his ability and willingness to save.

These are the conditions of your surrender and acceptance with God. They are liberal and reasonable ; all that you ought

to ask, or your injured Sovereign to offer. They are honorable conditions; honorable to God and honorable to yourself; and, when you bow and accept them, Christ becomes to you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; you are saved, and Jehovah is glorified.

Your present position, then, is one of great solemnity. Life and death are before you; the Judge standeth at the door. The point to be reached is immediate and unconditional submission to God. Bow to his will, and your salvation is sure.

“Sinner, why, why will you die?
God, your Saviour, asks you why.”

CHAPTER VIII.

REPENTANCE.

Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. Acts 3: 19.

EVANGELICAL repentance, as expressed in the Greek Scriptures, is a radical change of mind in view of sin, as it relates to God and his law, a turning of the soul from the love and practice of sin to the love of holiness and obedience to God. This thorough change in the sinner's views, purposes, and dispositions is preceded by genuine conviction of sin, and is accompanied with that deep, godly sorrow or regret on account of it, which results in life everlasting. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of." 2 Cor. 7: 10.

A man on a journey of great responsibility, and requiring speed, at length dis-

covers that he has taken a wrong direction, which, if pursued, will prove extremely disastrous. This discovery or conviction of his real condition is immediately followed by sorrow or regret. In view of it he repents, or changes his mind, and, having turned directly about, enters the right way. Thus it is with the repenting sinner. On his journey to another world, he is convinced by the Holy Spirit that he is a great sinner in heart and life, entirely wrong, pursuing the way to destruction; a destruction, too, deep as hell, broad as immensity, and endless as the eternity of God. His conviction of sin, if thorough and genuine, is followed by godly sorrow, not merely for the evils which sin has occasioned, but for sin itself, because it is vile and malignant, subversive of right government, dishonorable to God, and ruinous to the best interests of the universe. Convicted of sin, and grieving on account of it, he repents, or is entirely changed in his views, feelings, and conduct, and at once enters upon a life of faith and prayer.

Before his repentance he took pleasure in sin—now he hates it; before he repented he was averse to the duties of religion—now he loves them; before his repentance he cherished idols in his heart, and worshipped them—now he abhors and abandons them, and worships God in the beauty of holiness. He is “a new creature in Christ Jesus; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” Once he was in the way to death—now he is in the way to life; once he hated God and holiness—now he admires the divine character, and delights in the law of God after the inner man. “To repent,” says Mr. James, “is more, much more, than mere sorrow for sin; this is evident from what the apostle has remarked: ‘Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of.’ 2 Cor. 7: 10. True sorrow for sin is a *part* of repentance, and only a part, for the Scripture just quoted evidently makes a distinction between them. Many, very many, grieve for their sins, who never repent of them. Men may grieve for the

consequences of their sins without mourning for the sins themselves. The meaning of the word *repent*, is, a change of mind. Repentance, therefore, signifies *an entire change of a man's views, disposition, and conduct, with respect to sin.*" It is equivalent in meaning to *regeneration*. The new birth means a change of heart, and repentance is that same change, viewed in reference to sin.

Genuine repentance is not only preceded by conviction of sin, and accompanied with penitential sorrow, but is attended, also, with self-condemnation and self-abasement. The repenting sinner is stripped of his vain excuses; he no longer attempts to conceal or palliate his guilt, or charge the blame of his sins upon Adam, God, or his minister. He reproaches and condemns himself, and feels that he alone is the guilty party. The language of his heart is, "Father, I have sinned." "Woe is me, for I am undone." "Unclean, unclean." "O! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He feels,

moreover, that his sins have been committed against God, and grieves mainly on this account. Such were the feelings of penitent David, as expressed in the fifty-first psalm. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." He had murdered one, disgraced another, and dishonored himself in the eyes of the nation; and yet all this was small, compared with his guilt in the sight of God. It cut him to the heart that he had offended and insulted the infinite majesty of heaven and earth, that God of loving kindness and tender mercy who had not only redeemed him by his grace, and shielded him in the day of battle, but had honored him in the eyes of the nations by taking him from the sheep-cote and making him king over his people Israel. David was a child of God, a true penitent; it was not, therefore, punishment which he feared, or for which he grieved. It was sin; sin in himself, sin against God, clearly seen and deeply felt, which crushed his spirit, and constrained him to exclaim, "Have mercy upon me,

O God, for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." Had there been no hell, God and sin would have remained the same, and his sorrow would not have been less deep, nor his grief less poignant. The burden upon the Prodigal's heart was, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight." Peter's tears flowed in a gushing stream, not because he was sinking to hell, for he was then on his way to heaven, but because he had sinned, and dishonored and grieved his beloved Lord and Master, by publicly and shamefully denying him under circumstances of peculiar aggravation.

True repentance is also attended with a thorough reformation in heart and life. Secret and open sins will be abandoned, wicked ways forsaken, unrighteous principles relinquished, and God and Christ will be all in all. David's repentance was followed by a course of consistent and elevated piety. In his earnest longings for entire purity, he prays, "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my

sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Paul's sorrow for sin was attended with a mighty moral change in feeling and conduct. From a bitter persecutor he became a most devoted follower of Jesus, and successfully defended the faith which he once attempted to destroy. Peter's repentance ended not in sighs and sobs. He preached and prayed like one in earnest to save souls, and died a martyr to the cause. A man who has been burned in the fire, will not knowingly rush into the flames. A traveler who has once been stung by a scorpion, will not knowingly cherish that venomous creature in his bosom. Much less will the sinner, who has been effectually taught by the Spirit the evil nature and tremendous consequences of sin, knowingly and habitually transgress the divine command.

The true penitent will not only forsake, but hate his sins. Objects and pursuits which he once loved, he now detests. Feelings and conduct which once appeared comparatively innocent, he now regards as

utterly vile, entirely opposed to God and holiness, and he abhors them on this account. Such was the experience of David. "I hate vain thoughts." Ps. 119: 113. "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." Ps. 19: 12. The feelings of Job correspond with those of David in this particular. When he had a clear view of God's infinite holiness, he not only abhorred his sins, but himself on account of them. "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42: 6. The repentance of the Corinthian converts was attended with the same happy results. "For behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fear; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge!" 2 Cor. 7: 11.

Such in nature and effect is evangelical repentance. The Spirit of God is its author, and the contrite sinner its subject. It differs materially from false repentance or that which Judas experienced. It is said

of that traitor, that he repented, but he did not reform; he lived a thief and died a murderer. Had he been a true penitent, he would have looked to Jesus for pardon, forsaken and hated his sins, and commenced a religious life. He was sorry, no doubt, that he had committed a sin which exposed him to the endless displeasure of God, amidst the flames of the bottomless pit; but for sin itself, irrespective of its consequences, we have reason to believe he was not sorry, for he went away immediately and hanged himself; that is, he committed a sin next in criminality, probably, to that of betraying his Lord. The elements of hell were in his bosom, where its fires were already kindled. Paul's repentance made him a saint—the repentance of Judas left him a devil. “Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.” John 6: 70, 71.

Reader, have you repented? Do you now repent? Is your heart filled with anguish for sin? This work is appropriately

your own; no one can do it for you. Should others shed rivers of tears on your account, it would avail you nothing, while you remain impenitent. The fountain of godly sorrow must be opened in your own bosom; the tide of penitential grief must gush from your own heart. The Spirit is now striving; why do you resist him? He works in you both to will and to do, and you must work out your salvation with fear and trembling. "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." Yes, you must repent or perish, and perish, too, in the world of despair, and perish everlastingly.

But do you ask, *When* shall I repent? A strange question indeed for an awakened sinner to propose. You would be surprised to hear a man, standing on the brink of a burning lake, ask whether he should go forward or backward, and when he should do it. You are to repent immediately. While you are reading these pages, your heart should break in contrition, and flow out in penitential sorrow. Convicted sinners on the day of Pentecost asked not

when they should repent, but what they should do. They felt the burden of guilt, and desired to have it removed at the earliest possible moment.

But I hear you say, I fear I am not sufficiently convicted of sin. Are you convicted at all? If so, repent immediately, renounce and abhor your sins. Would you travel to the top of Sinai, that you may feel the hottest bolts of offended justice, or go down to the burning pit, that you may experience the wailings of the lost, before you repent? On your way to Calvary you must pass Sinai. Be thankful that you are not required to be crushed by its thunders, before you can reach the mount of mercy.

CHAPTER IX.

FAITH IN GOD.

Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God. 1 Pet. 1: 21.

WE shall consider, in this chapter, the nature, importance, and objects of Faith, and attempt to show how it may be exercised so as to secure salvation.

1. The nature of Faith. Faith, in general, is that principle in the soul which enables us to trust in the word and character of a being possessing attributes worthy of confidence. It presupposes knowledge; for we cannot trust in one of whom we are entirely ignorant. It requires integrity in the being in whom it is reposed; for we cannot confide implicitly in one who is known to deceive. It is attended with peace, joy, and sensible comfort; implies

expectation, leads to obedience, and insures reward. Take an illustration :—

A man guilty of some capital offence, and under sentence of death, is confined in prison, waiting for his execution. While reflecting upon his forlorn and hopeless condition, a person enters his cell and hands him a letter. He opens and reads it, and finds it contains a promise, in the handwriting of his prince, that if he will sincerely and publicly confess to him his crime, he shall be pardoned and set at liberty. Knowing that his prince, being a man of truth, always fulfils his promises, he believes his declaration. This is faith, and the strength of his faith will be in proportion to the evidence he has of his sovereign's integrity. He now expects his liberty, not because he desires it, or deserves it, but because his sovereign has promised it, and his expectation is attended with sensible comfort, even before he receives forgiveness. Having signified his acceptance of the proposed conditions, he is released from his chains, his prison door

is opened, he appears in the presence of his prince, makes the confession required, is pardoned, and set at liberty. His faith led to obedience, and obedience secured reward. What, now, were the cause and ground of that man's faith? Not his desires to be released from his confinement; for these he had, while, to his own mind, his condition was hopeless. Nor was it the integrity of his prince, merely, for this was a well-known fact before he received offers of pardon. The cause of his faith was, evidently, the word of his prince, and his integrity was the ground of it. Had his sovereign been deceitful, he could not have believed him. Had he been a man of integrity, and made no offers of pardon, his condition would still have been hopeless.

In this illustration we see the operation of the understanding and heart, in the exercise of faith. The prisoner, perceiving the conditions of pardon, and their connection with his future happiness, and expecting his liberty on the ground of his sovereign's integrity, heartily accepted them;

he confessed his crime, reformed his life, and, becoming an obedient subject, was restored to royal favor.

2. The importance of Faith. Is it a doom unspeakably dreadful to die in sin and sink to perdition? "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." John 8: 24. "He that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16: 16. Is deliverance from the tremendous penalty of God's violated law a blessing greatly to be desired? "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. 10: 4. Is a state of justification and peace with God an honor and a privilege? "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5: 1. Is purity of heart essential to the heavenly state? "Purifying their hearts by faith." Acts 15: 9. Do those inherit peculiar honors who are children of God and sons of God? "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3: 26. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God,

even to them that believe on his name." John 1: 12. Is life everlasting in heaven an imperishable treasure? "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life." John 3: 36. From these declarations of Scripture, you perceive, at once, the immense importance of faith in Christ.

3. The object of Faith. The triune Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, possessing all those infinite and adorable perfections ascribed to him in his Word, and reflected in his works of creation and providence, is the object of saving faith. He is an object surpassingly grand, attractive, and glorious, and is, in all respects, worthy of the highest confidence of his intelligent creatures. Such was the object of Abraham's faith. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Rom. 4: 3. Such is the object of every true believer's faith. "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. 11: 6.

Saving faith respects Christ as its object,

especially in his mediatorial character as the Son of God, our atoning priest, intercessor, king, and judge. Says our Saviour, "Ye believe in God ; believe also in me." John 14: 1. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16: 31. "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life." John 6: 40. These passages sufficiently indicate the object of the believer's faith. All who believe in Christ, take his word as the rule of their life.

4. We are now to consider how faith may be exercised so as to secure pardon and salvation. Awakened reader, you have now arrived at a most interesting point,—the point upon which, especially, your salvation depends. Faith in God and Christ is the leading grace. Without it, you are a vessel of wrath, fitted to destruction ; with it, you are a vessel of mercy, fitted for glory, honor, and immortality. Are you anxious to believe, and would you believe, if you knew how to do it? I invite your

attention, then, to the following considerations : —

1. God is the object of saving faith, and you are to approach him and believe in him, through Jesus the mediator. He says, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth ; for I am God, and there is none else.” Isa. 45: 22. This command, accompanied with a precious promise, is addressed to all, and to you in particular. It presents God as the object of faith, salvation as the reward of faith, and looking to God as the way to secure this salvation. Faith is the eye, that looks to God. You have only to look and be saved. How easy and simple ! What could be more so ? Looking, here, is the same thing as believing or trusting. You are to look to God for salvation, and to believe in looking. But how are you to look effectually ? Saving faith is an exercise of the heart, and implies affection. You must look to God, then, not with your bodily eye, not with your understanding merely, but with your heart. “For with the heart

man believeth unto righteousness." Rom. 10: 10. In looking to God, effectually, you must believe in him, and trust in his word with all your heart. Such was the instruction of Philip to the inquiring Eunuch. "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." Acts 8: 37.

But what are you to believe with all your heart? You are to believe not only that God is, and that his word is infallible truth, but that he will faithfully perform what he has promised; that if you comply with his requisitions, you will be saved; that is, you shall realize all that is implied in present and eternal salvation.

2. You are to believe immediately. Yes, while reading these pages you are to exercise faith. And why not? God will never be more worthy of your confidence, than he now is. It will never be easier for you to exercise faith in him, than it now is. Nothing but accumulated guilt and overwhelming destruction can be gained by waiting. Your condition is perilous; it is fearfully alarming. "He that believeth

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not, is condemned already; the wrath of God abideth on him." Unbelief is that great sin which emphatically deserves death, and you are guilty of it every moment. You have multiplied these sins, till their cry for vengeance has entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. To this and to all other sins God has proclaimed his irreconcilable hatred. His language is, "Do not that abominable thing which I hate." Look unto God, and be saved; believe in him now, and you shall live. The jailer believed immediately, and was pardoned and justified. The man in prison, under sentence of death, on receiving offers of pardon from his sovereign, believed at once, and was released from condemnation. Your duty is plain; it is a pressing duty; believe in God now, believe with all your heart, and you shall be saved.

3. You are to believe joyfully. "He that believeth, shall be saved;" yes, shall be saved from endless sinning and endless suffering. O reader, what joyful tidings!

You should rejoice in the offers of pardon, and rejoice, too, that you can accept them. The jailer rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house. He had occasion for it; his sins were pardoned, his guilt was purged away, and his heaven secured. You, too, should rejoice in believing, and rejoice exceedingly, that you can believe now. The Spirit is striving; God is near as the object of faith; salvation is the reward of faith, and this reward is obtained simply by believing. On the first exercise of faith, you are to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and brought into the liberty of the sons of God; you are to be pardoned, justified, and received into royal favor. Glad tidings indeed! Rejoice and believe; believe in God and rejoice, and you shall have occasion for augmented joy to all eternity.

4. Saving faith implies expectation. In the exercise of faith in God, you are to expect salvation, free, full, and eternal salvation, purchased and offered through the

mediation and death of his Son ; and you are to expect it on the ground of his veracity, of which you have as good evidence now as you ever will have. You may, indeed, feel your unworthiness of so great a blessing ; but you must not doubt the ability or willingness of God to bestow it. Unbelief is sin ; it is an insult offered to the great Jehovah. You would feel yourself dishonored, should you offer to relieve a beggar, and he should doubt your sincerity, or question your veracity. The evidence of both is as clear to his own mind now, as it will be to-morrow, or next year. God is true and faithful ; “just and right is he.” “Hath he said, and will he not do it? Hath he promised, and will he not make it good?” Has God ever deceived you, or proved unfaithful to his promises? You know he has not. Believe in him, then, and expect salvation ; take him at his word, trust in him now, and you shall be immediately pardoned and justified through faith ; confide in him implicitly,

with all your heart, and you "shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever."

5. Saving faith leads to obedience, and insures reward. If we have true faith in God, we shall not only believe his word, but cheerfully obey it, without asking questions or requiring reasons for the divine procedure, and shall find, with the Psalmist, that "in keeping his commandments there is great reward." Such was the faith of Abraham. When required to leave his own country for a land of strangers, he "obeyed, and he went out not knowing whither he went." Says the apostle John, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1: 9. In these few words, the method of pardon and acceptance with God is clearly described. We have only to confess our sins, humbly, with deep contrition and entire renunciation, and God is both faithful and just to forgive them. Yes, he will do more, (and more certainly

needs to be done ;) he will, by the sanctifying power of his Spirit, ultimately cleanse us from all unrighteousness, make us perfectly holy, and fit us for heaven. All this God has promised. Do you believe it, and does your faith lead to obedience? Are you proving it by your own experience? Have you confessed, and do you now humbly and penitently confess your sins, expecting to be forgiven on the word and truth of God? This is faith; and faith exercised shall be rewarded; you shall be forgiven. The man in prison first believed the offers of pardon made by his prince, and, on the strength of his faith in the word and veracity of his sovereign, he obeyed; that is, complied with the conditions of pardon, and was rewarded; he was pardoned and set at liberty. This view of the subject accords with the experience of David. On the strength of his faith in the word and veracity of God, he says, "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the

Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Ps. 32: 5.

But you say, I have confessed my sins a hundred times, and yet I feel the burden; they are not forgiven. And did you confess them in faith? Did you expect to be forgiven? Is your humility as deep as that of the Publican, and your contrition as thorough? Like Peter, have you grieved for and mourned over sin? Look well to these questions, and answer them honestly, before you complain. One thing more. Have you forsaken your sins, as well as confessed them? Have you done it in faith? "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy." Prov. 28: 13. Are you ready to abandon, now and forever, all sins of action, secret and open profaneness, Sabbath-breaking, excessive worldliness, dishonesty, and sins still more gross and flagrant, if you have been guilty of them? Sins of heart, too, unbelief, pride, ingratitude, selfishness, hatred, malice, revenge, and a host of forbid-

den lusts and appetites, must be sacrificed. Sins of omission, also, equally numerous, and perhaps not less criminal—such as neglect of God, want of love to him, neglect of prayer, not loving your neighbor as yourself, want of love to enemies, neglect of Christ, and others of a kindred nature, must be abandoned. The dearest and most hidden sin, that traitor of the soul, must be brought out and slain upon the altar of God. Make this sacrifice cheerfully, heartily, and in faith, and you shall have mercy, and such mercy as includes pardon, peace, hope, consolation, and triumph, and a crown of life, which fadeth not away, in heaven. This shall be your everlasting reward.

Here it may be proper to remark, that there are some sins which God requires us to confess to man as well as to himself, before they can be forgiven, and conscience will point them out. I refer now to wrongs and injuries done to others. A young man, who had been remarkable for his integrity and correctness in external deportment, in

an hour of temptation, when he could do it without detection, withheld a sum of money from its owner, and laid it aside for his own use. Some time after, the Spirit of God visited the place of his residence, and among others, he was awakened. His convictions were pungent; he sighed, and wept, and prayed, but found no relief. Others conversed with him, and pointed him to the Lamb of God; but his burden remained. To some it was a matter of surprise, that one so amiable should be crushed so long, and seek salvation with so much apparent earnestness, but not obtain it. He, however, knew the reason. That money, unjustly withheld, that wedge of gold, that accursed thing, was still in his house, and conscience would not suffer him to rest, nor God grant him pardon, till it was brought out and restored. He knew his duty, but refused to do it; the struggle was long and severe; conviction was consuming his energies; the rebukes of conscience were terrible; a cross was before him; it must be taken up; but O, how

could he do it? His reputation was at stake; disgrace would be fastened upon him. He had confessed his sin to God, but that was not enough; he must confess it to man; he saw clearly that he must do it, or lie down in endless burnings. At length he disclosed the matter to a confidential friend, and was advised to go to the man, and tell him that he had made a mistake in reckoning, and would make restitution. "O, no," he replied, "that will not do; I made no mistake; I did it knowingly; I must tell the whole." Here you see the power of conscience. This friend advised him to go and confess the whole, as conscience bade him. He did so: taking the money, he hastened to the man, as if avenging justice was behind him, fell upon his knees, confessed his sin, and made restitution. The man, surprised at the matter, cheerfully forgave him. His burden disappeared; he arose with a light and joyful heart, believed in God, and for years has been a valuable member of the church of Christ.

Reader, have you cherished unkind feelings towards another, or injured him in character or property? Go and confess your fault, and, as far as possible, make restitution, as conscience bids you. Is it humbling? That may be one reason why God requires it. The pride of your heart must be brought down; humility is essential to saving faith. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." James 5: 16.

Let us go back now to the illustration in the former part of the chapter, and suppose that the man in prison, through unbelief, had refused to accept the offers of pardon made by his sovereign; what would have been the consequence? He must have been executed; the kindness, mercy, and benevolence of his sovereign, even, could not have saved him. He would have lost his life, too, not because he had broken the law, and deserved to die, but because, in his unbelief, he had refused to

accept the offers of pardon. He would have deserved twice to die, first for his crime, and secondly for his unbelief. You, too, awakened sinner, if you continue in unbelief, must die inevitably and everlastingly. The mercy and benevolence of God in Christ, even, cannot save you. Your conviction of sin, your prayers and tears, your anxiety for salvation, will avail nothing, unless you believe. "He that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16 : 16. If, then, you perish eternally, unbelief will be the real cause of your destruction. Faith is the saving grace. "He that believeth shall be saved." Whatever else may be done, if faith be not exercised, you will be lost ; and you will be saved, if you have true faith in God, should death overtake you the next moment.

CHAPTER X.

FAITH IN CHRIST.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Acts 16: 31.

As saving faith respects Christ as its object, we shall now attempt to show how it may be exercised so as to secure the blessings of his atonement. Faith in God and faith in Christ are essentially the same, possessing similar properties, and differing only in the objects on which they rest.

Saving faith respects the character, word, and works of Christ. The character of Christ includes not only his being and attributes, as he existed from eternity, but all the divine perfections, happily blended and embodied in a human form, and shining out illustriously and gloriously in the person of Christ. The word of Christ com-

prehends all that he has himself said or revealed by the Holy Spirit in the sacred Scriptures. The works of Christ include all that he has done in creating, sustaining, and redeeming the world, and all that he has done and will do for his people as their intercessor at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Christ, the object of the believer's faith, is eternal, unchangeable, infinite in wisdom and holiness, almighty, all-sufficient, merciful and compassionate, in himself infinitely desirable, attractive, and lovely, and able and willing to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1: 12, 13. Faith is the hand that receives Christ. Receiving Christ is the same as believing, trusting or confiding in him, and implies an expectation that he will perform all that he has promised.

1. Relying upon the assistance of the divine Spirit, you are to believe in Christ immediately, and joyfully to receive him by faith, with all your heart, as revealed in the Bible, not merely as God, for God out of Christ "is a consuming fire," (Heb. 12: 29;) not merely as man, for, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." (Jer. 17: 5.) But you are to receive him by faith in his divine and human natures combined, as God manifest in the flesh, for "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" and in this capacity you are to acknowledge him as your mediator, standing between you and God, to negotiate terms of reconciliation. You must receive him by faith as your atoning priest, obeying the divine law, and suffering its penalty in your stead, for God the Father poured upon him, as our substitute and expiatory sacrifice, those vials of his wrath, which must have crushed our hopes forever, and sent us to a world of endless weeping. You must receive Christ as your king, admit

him to the throne of your heart, submit cheerfully to his authority, and obey his laws. You must receive him also as your intercessor at the right hand of God, to advocate your cause, and as your final judge, not only to search your heart, but to absolve you from legal penalties, and admit you to life everlasting in his presence above.

In thus believing on Christ, you are to expect all the blessings included in being a son and heir of God, and you are to expect them on the ground of his infallible word and inviolable veracity, for he declares, "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away." Mark 13: 31. O, glorious Saviour, infinitely worthy of our highest confidence and purest love!

2. It is essential to faith in Christ, that we be cut off entirely from every created dependence. Awakened sinners are much more inclined to trust in a Saviour of their own creation, than to confide in Jesus, whom God hath appointed. But this

course must be abandoned, or true faith will not be exercised. As the scion must be entirely separated from its original stock before it can be grafted into the new one, and be made a partaker of the root and fatness of the same, so the sinner must be entirely cut off from every created dependence, before he can be united to Christ by faith, and receive from him spiritual and eternal life. So long as you trust in your morality, your convictions, your friends, the world, or any other refuge of lies, Christ will not accept you. These must all be abandoned; the altar of Moloch must be demolished; these idols of the heart must be surrendered; you must cut loose from them all, and launch abroad upon the fathomless ocean of redeeming mercy and love. Christ alone, Immanuel, God with us, must be your Saviour.

3. In the exercise of saving faith, the sinner, aided by the Holy Spirit, commits himself, in all his guilt and helplessness, entirely to Christ, and relies on him alone for salvation. This committal Saul of Tarsus

made, when he said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The thief upon the cross made it, as he uttered the petition, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." When this point is gained, the conflict ceases, the clouds disappear, and beams of heavenly light break in upon the soul. Anxious sinner, do earthly supports fail you? Has the hope of saving yourself vanished? Is every other path obstructed, except that which leads to the cross? Happy moment! Blessed crisis! The way is now open for you to be saved. Faith begins where works cease; life commences where death terminates. Go to Jesus; go just as you are, wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked.

"All the fitness he requireth
Is, to feel your need of him."

He kindly invites you, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11: 28. Make a full and final committal of yourself to Christ, and you shall find rest,—rest,

too, which includes pardon, justification, and eternal life.

‘But how shall I make this committal?’ Jeremiah, the prophet, was once let down into a dungeon by his enemies, where he must soon have perished from hunger and other causes, had he not been rescued by the power of another. Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian, having interceded with the king in the prophet’s behalf, obtained an order to take thirty men with him, and draw Jeremiah out of the dungeon. The order was executed, and the prophet saved. (Jer. 38.) Now, apply this illustration to yourself. The prophet, sinking in the mire and exposed to death, saw clearly that he had no power adequate to his deliverance; that, if saved at all, he must be rescued by the power of another, while at the same time he felt that he had something to do; he could cry for help, and accept it when offered. You, as a condemned sinner, under sentence of death, and sinking in guilt to a world of misery, have no power to save yourself. You

perceive, that, if rescued at all, you must be rescued by an arm of infinite strength, while at the same time you have something to do in the work of salvation. The friends of Jeremiah, aware of his condition, let down to him ropes and other means of deliverance, and promised to raise him up out of the dungeon, if he would avail himself of the instrumentality which they offered. Jesus, the sinner's friend, aware of your condition, has come to deliver you; he has made all the provision requisite for your salvation, and promises to save you from impending destruction, if you will by faith receive him as your deliverer, and rely for acceptance with God upon his mediation and atonement.

When the ropes were let down to the prophet, and his friends had assured him that they would draw him out of the dungeon, his condition and prospects were immediately changed; faith began to operate, and it did not seem difficult for him to exercise it. He believed that he could be saved, and was comforted; he expected

deliverance, for he had confidence in the strength of the ropes and the assurance of his friends, in their ability and willingness to fulfil their promise, and he intended to avail himself of their offer. This was faith in its incipient operations; but still he was not yet rescued. It was not enough for the prophet to realize his perilous condition, and be distressed in view of it; or to believe that he could be rescued, and even expect it; all this was not enough; he must do one thing more, and the very thing required. He must in faith commit himself to those ropes, and cling to them, relying solely upon his friends for deliverance: he did so, and was rescued; his faith, in an important sense, saved him, although in reality delivered by the power of others.

From these remarks you perceive, that it is not enough that Christ has made an atonement, and promises to save the penitent believer, and that he even stands with outstretched arms to receive him. It is not enough that you believe the fact, and

even intend and expect to be saved ; it is not enough that you have been convicted of sin, and felt yourself sinking to perdition ; that you have prayed, and read the Bible, and asked what you should do to be saved ; all this is not enough ; if you stop here, you will perish. You must do one thing more ; you must have the faith of committal, and in the exercise of it fall into the arms of Christ, relying on him alone for salvation. Till this point is reached, there is no safety ; till this act is performed, there is nothing done to any saving purpose. “ By faith ye stand.” “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” At this point salvation begins, and beyond it spiritual life will be enjoyed, till faith is crowned with immortality above. “ Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”

Do you thus believe ? Have you made the final committal of yourself to Christ, and will you in faith follow him ? I charge you to do it, and to do it onward till death is swallowed up in victory, and faith shall be consummated in the full fruition of God.

In the deliverance of Jeremiah, we have a happy illustration of divine and human agency combined in the sinner's salvation. God mercifully interposed in his behalf; he inclined him to take hold of those ropes, and enabled him to cling to them every moment, till he was raised to a place of safety. Upon this invisible, divine power the prophet relied; and had it been withheld, had he been stupid, stubborn, or unbelieving, or yielding to unreasonable fears, had he refused to make an effort, he must have perished in the dungeon. In the prophet sinking in the mire, behold where and what you are, on whom you must depend, and what you must do to be saved. You see that, if you are stupid or stubborn, if you refuse to believe, or yield to groundless fears, you must perish in your sins. Your own efforts are no less essential to your salvation than divine agency; they must both move together. When God acts, you must act; when the Spirit strives, you must yield to his influence; when Christ is presented as your all-sufficient deliverer,

you must accept him by faith. And why not? Is he not both able and willing to save? You know he is. Has he ever proved treacherous? You know he has not. Has he not saved multitudes, like yourself, perishing in sin? You know he has. By faith, then, fall immediately into his almighty arms of love and mercy. He saves to the uttermost ; give him your supreme affection, yield entirely to his control, cling to him with all your heart, depending every moment upon divine assistance, as you rise, step by step, to your home and your treasure on Mount Zion above.

4. Saving faith receives Christ as a deliverer from sin as well as from suffering. The great end contemplated in the atonement of Christ, was to deliver his people from their sins, and restore them to the moral image of God, which was lost in the fall. Hence the angel said to Joseph, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Matt. 1: 21. "Unto him that loved us,

and washed us from our sins in his own blood," is the ascription of praise to the Lamb from the redeemed in heaven. This great purifying process commences with the first exercise of evangelical faith, or at regeneration, wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit. "According to his mercy he saved us," says an apostle, "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Tit. 3: 5.

Are you burdened with sin? "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and your sins in particular, if you look to him by faith. The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1: 7. That blood is as available now, and as efficacious to take away sin, as when it poured in a gushing tide from the cross. Beneath that tide you must place your guilty soul; through the efficacy of that blood, received by faith, and applied by the Holy Spirit, you are to be purified from all iniquity. The guilt of Paul and Peter was purged by it, and yours must be removed in the same way. "Look-

ing unto Jesus," says an apostle, "the author and finisher of our faith." Heb. 12: 2.

Do you say, 'I have looked once and again, and find no relief?' Did you look in faith, expecting to be cleansed, not only from actual transgression and sins of omission, but from the original corruption of your nature, which must be removed by the blood of the Lamb? Apply to the blood of Jesus, and continue to look to him till the progress of death is arrested, and the burden of sin is gone; but be careful to look with an expecting faith. The Israelites, who were bitten by the fiery serpents, were required to look to the brazen serpent raised upon a pole in the midst of the camp; and as many as looked were healed. When bitten by a serpent, they did not fasten their eyes upon their wound, till the poison, coursing on to their vitals, had diffused itself through their whole system. No; when sensible of their condition, they resorted to no expedients of their own devising, but were anxious mainly to get at the remedy; they looked immediately, and

in earnest, to the brazen serpent, expecting to be healed both from the testimony of Jehovah, and from the fact that no one had perished who had complied with his requisition, and they continued to look until their restoration was complete. Christ crucified is to you what the brazen serpent was to the Israelites; for "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3: 14, 15. Sensible, then, of your perishing condition as a sinner, you must not look continually at your sins, but look away from yourself, immediately and in earnest, to the atoning blood of Jesus, expecting a moral renovation, and continue to look in earnest expectation, till your sins are blotted out, and Christ is formed in you the hope of glory.

5. Justification results from faith in Christ, and is essential to salvation.

Justification is the opposite of condemnation; it includes pardon and implies righteousness. We are both pardoned and

justified, or treated as righteous, through faith in Christ. Pardon affects our relation to sin, justification our relation to God; pardon releases from penalty, justification restores to favor; we are pardoned often, yet justified but once; pardon delivers from condemnation for the past, justification secures from condemnation for the future. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8: 1. "It is God that justifieth—who is he that condemneth?" Rom. 8: 33, 34.

Before you can enter heaven, you must be pardoned and justified, for "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." Rev. 21: 27.

You cannot be justified by your own works, for "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Rom. 3: 20. "He that believeth not is condemned already." John 3: 18. Your justification and acceptance with God must

come through the righteousness of Christ. But what is the righteousness of Christ? Of this it is important that you should have a clear and distinct idea. The righteousness of Christ consists in his perfect obedience to the divine law, which we had broken, and his sufferings and death to atone or make satisfaction for the sins with which we were chargeable in violating that law, and for which we deserved to be punished in the world of despair forever. His pains procured our pardon, his conflicts our triumphs, and his ignominious death our life of endless pleasure and joy before the throne. For "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree." All, then, that Christ did and suffered for us, while on earth, as our substitute or propitiatory sacrifice, both in respect to obedience and atonement, may be regarded as our righteousness. Hence he is called in Scripture, "The Lord our Righteousness." Jer. 23 : 6. "Who of God," says an apostle, "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness,

and sanctification, and redemption.” 1 Cor. 1: 30. When we, in the exercise of repentance and faith, receive Christ as our surety or righteousness, God the Father freely forgives all our sins, accepts and treats us as righteous in his sight, solely on account of what Christ has done for us, and we, being justified by faith, are entitled to all the privileges and blessings of the sons of God. “Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Rom. 3: 24—26. “For he hath made him [Christ] to be sin [or a sin-offering] for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Cor. 5: 21. So long as we abide in Christ, we have his perfect righteousness to shield us from the

penalty of the law, and to render us the objects of divine approbation.

“When Justice calls for sinners’ blood,
The Saviour shows his own.”

And here I remark, that justification by faith is attended with sensible comfort. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The believing jailer experienced this peace, and the eunuch went on his way rejoicing. If you are still burdened with sin, under a sense of condemnation, have no peace in believing, no consolation in God, you are not in a justified state. The faith which saves, not only affords present comfort, but looks forward with sure expectation to the glories of God’s upper kingdom as its ultimate reward. “Whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Rom. 8 : 30.

Where now is the mystery of faith? Look and be saved ; believe and live. It is so simple, that a child may exercise it, and so plain, that the most illiterate need not mistake.

Reader, the object of faith is now before you, Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant. He is near, precious, inviting, infinitely glorious, and mighty to save. Salvation, the reward of faith, is within your reach. If you perish, it will not be merely because you have sinned, but because in unbelief you reject salvation. The present moment is yours ; it is loaded with blessings to be secured by faith, or lost by unbelief. A single act may decide the question, whether, for a vast eternity, you sing in heaven or weep in despair.

CHAPTER XI.

PRAYER.

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. Luke 18: 1.

THE awakened sinner must pray, and, if in earnest to secure salvation, he will pray often and fervently for divine forgiveness. You cannot restrain him from praying; the desires of his burdened soul will break forth in earnest cries for deliverance. "O! that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat, for the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit;" "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness;" "Lord, save me, or I perish," will be the spontaneous expressions of his soul, while, with a burdened heart, he lifts up his imploring eye

unto Him who has said, "I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."

Isa. 43 : 11. "I, even I, am he that blot-teth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."
Isa. 43 : 25.

Reader, have you prayed? If not, enter your closet immediately, and, in the deepest prostration of soul, confess your sins before God. Confess them heartily and without reserve, in deep self-abasement; mourn over them with sincere, godly sorrow. A contrite spirit God will not despise. Are you too proud to enter your closet, and confess your sins? You are, then, too proud to be forgiven. A lofty spirit God abhors; "the proud he knoweth afar off." "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." You must sink low at his feet, in brokenness of heart, before you can be exalted to the elevated station of being a son and an heir of God. "He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." When or where can the sinner expect forgiveness, if not in humble con-

fession at the feet of Jesus? The posture in prayer, the feelings to be cherished, and our attempts to express them, are all favorable to the work of the Spirit. You must pray, or your present religious impressions will not be deepened, or even retained; the Spirit will be grieved, and take his departure, it may be, forever.

I would advise you to kneel, in your secret devotions; not that God regards the exterior, but because our posture in prayer affects ourselves; an humble posture becomes the suppliant. And here I remark, that there is no king's highway to the cross or to heaven. The wealthy and honorable, the judge upon the bench, and the sovereign upon his throne, must go to God as does the most illiterate beggar, in humbleness of spirit, and, as guilty suppliants, confess their sins and plead for mercy. To the poor and contrite in spirit, who tremble at his word, God looks with favor.

But do you say, "I am too wicked to pray"? It is quite evident, then, that you are too guilty and too needy to live with-

out praying. But where, in the Bible, has God declared, in respect to you or any awakened sinner, that you are too wicked to pray? Christ "came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The number and magnitude of your sins are most powerful reasons why you should confess them to God, and plead for pardon. Were you an angel, you would have no need of praying; were you a devil, it would avail nothing if you should pray. But you are neither; you are a great sinner, in a world of mercy, and can be pardoned freely, if, in contrition and faith, you ask it. Says our Saviour, "Ask, and it shall be given you." Matt. 7: 7. "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." James 1: 6. Can you expect pardon on easier conditions? The publican was a great sinner; but he prayed, and God heard him, for he was pardoned and justified. The thief on the cross was a great sinner; but he prayed, and Jesus heard him, and the same day received him to heaven. Simon, the sorcerer, was a great sinner;

yet Peter exhorted him to repent, and to pray to God, that the thought of his heart might be forgiven. I have never known an awakened sinner to make any progress towards the right way, while he refused to pray. The Holy Spirit works most effectually, in subduing the heart, when the sinner is in deep prostration before God, pleading for mercy. But "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord." Prov. 15 : 8. Yes, and you have offered that sacrifice quite too long. "The sacrifices of God [or such as God accepts] are a broken spirit." Ps. 51 : 17. This is the offering he requires at your hand, and he will accept no other. "But," you reply, "I have not that brokenness of spirit." And can you expect it, while you stupidly or stubbornly refuse to ask it? "If any of you lack wisdom, [or true religion,] let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." James 1 : 5. "Seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened

unto you." Matt. 7 : 7. Your duty is plain ; do it, then, without delay.

But how shall I ask, so as to secure the blessing ? Cease to disobey God, and grieve his Spirit by vain excuses. Read the fifty-first Psalm, again and again ; ponder well the noble sentiments expressed in every verse, until, by drinking in the spirit of the author, you make them your own. Sink as low in self-abasement as David did, confess as freely and fully your sins, and cherish the same spirit of contrition, and you will soon shine out in the lustre of a new creation, and delight in the law of God after the inner man. " And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Jer. 29 : 13. A first right feeling must be exercised ; and where shall it be exercised, if not while pleading for mercy at the Saviour's feet ? A first right act must be performed ; but when shall it be performed, if not while attempting, like the man with the withered hand, to obey the command of Jesus ? He willed the act, and Christ gave him power

to perform it; and you will find the Saviour no less ready to assist you in your efforts to obtain salvation.

A youth in college, who had opposed a revival of religion, then in progress, began at length to feel the gentle strivings of the Spirit, and called on the president, to ask what he should do. After this interview, he returned to his room, turned the key of his door, for the first time in his life knelt down to pray, and, while offering up his petitions, a great change took place in his feelings—he loved every body, and particularly those whom, for their religion's sake, he had hated the most bitterly. More than twenty years, spent in the service of Christ, have since elapsed, and he still looks back to that season of prayer, as the time when he first began to live by faith upon the Son of God.

A young man returned home from a religious meeting, somewhat impressed with the importance of experimental piety. A friend, aware of his state of mind, urged him immediately to commence a religious

life ; but for this he was not quite ready. She continued to impress upon him his duty, and he, to check her importunity, affected a burst of laughter, and observed, " You see how much I care about religion." His friend, knowing that God and truth were on her side, and perceiving that the Spirit was striving, continued to urge upon him the importance of personal religion, and invited him to pray with her before he retired to rest. It was a favored moment ; conscience smote him ; he knew that he ought to be a Christian ; and, yielding to her request, he knelt down, for the first time in his life, to pray. While expressing his feelings in broken petitions, confessing sin, and grieving on account of it, his will bowed, his pride was humbled, and he gave himself up to Christ. That prayer, and that struggle, he will never forget. Then he began to live in Christ by faith, and discovered the first rays of that Sun of righteousness, which has since been rising in strength and brightness to meridian day.

These facts are directly to the point; they show the importance of prayer as a means of grace in seeking religion. The father met the prodigal, embraced him with paternal tenderness, and freely forgave him, when that dissolute son returned home and made confession.

If Satan suggests that you are too wicked to pray, reject the suggestion as coming from the father of lies, and, in obedience to Christ, enter your closet and pray. Carry with you into the closet a feeling of unlimited dependence, and let it attend you at every step in your way to Christ. In all your attempts at prayer, rely upon the Holy Spirit for assistance. He knows what you need, and can remove every obstacle from your path to the cross. He alone can awaken right desires, and produce in you the principle of faith. Are you ignorant? The Spirit will teach you. Do you find it difficult to express yourself in prayer? The Spirit will help your infirmities. God can understand your broken petitions.

“Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.”

Are you burdened with sin? Ask God, for Jesus's sake, to remove it. Are you covered with guilt? Beseech him to wash you in the blood of atonement. Do you need faith? Ask it of God, “who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.” “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” Mark 11:24. In your attempts to pray, never lose sight of Christ; he is your strength and righteousness and medium of access to God. Ask every thing in his name, plead his merits alone, accept him as your surety, bow and make a cheerful surrender of all, keeping nothing back. If your burden be heavy, cast it upon him; he is able to bear it. To the heavy laden, who came to him, he promised rest, and he adds, “Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” If you obtain not the blessing at your first request ask again,

and continue to ask ; the Saviour encourages importunity. Plead earnestly, and plead with expectation ; give him no rest. The Syrophœnician woman did so, and obtained the blessing. On no consideration relax your effort, or cease to plead till your salvation is secured, “for in due season you shall reap, if you faint not.” “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”



Reader, I have now finished my remarks upon those topics, to which, to my own mind, it seemed most important to direct your attention as an awakened sinner. This solemn subject I must now leave with you, hoping that the thoughts already suggested may assist you in entering the way of life. May the Spirit of God guide you into all truth, and enable you, day by day, to receive the incorruptible seed of the word, which liveth and abideth for-

ever. "Fight the good fight of faith ; lay hold on eternal life." "Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." So shall your peace be as a river, and your path, like the shining light, grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.



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